

Kabuki  
+  
Taiko  
+  
Kodo  
+  
Artistic use of contrasts  
=  
**MYSTERY**



## Kodo

Monday, February 2, 2015

Zellerbach Hall, University of California Berkeley





## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

We invite you to challenge yourself and your students to think with the curiosity and passion of the artist. This Engagement Guide is organized around 4 key artistic practices (as identified in the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards): <http://nccas.wikispaces.com/>

**Investigating:** Questioning, exploring, and challenging.

**Imagining:** Opening the door to what's possible, and even to what seems impossible.

**Creating:** Making artistic choices with a work of art in mind.

**Connecting:** Reflecting on both process and product and making connections to other aspects of life and study.

Throughout this document, you can link on specific subjects that you or your students want more information about. The body of the Engagement Guide invites exploration before and after the performance, giving each student tools to make personal and meaningful connections during the show.

There are five (5) pre-performance classroom engagement activities and 2 post-performance activities for reflection and artistic practice. The activities are flexible and are easily expanded if you have more classroom time to commit to understanding and appreciating Kodo's performance of *Mystery*.

We are aiming to cultivate artistic literacy, defined by the NCCAS as having sufficient knowledge and understanding of an art form to participate in it authentically. Authentic participation as an audience member is cultivated through engagement with the core aspects of the art form and the artists' inspiration and choice-making process. Imagining oneself in the artistic creation of a performance opens pathways to understanding the larger world of the art form, beyond a single performance.

The artistically literate student audience comes to understand that every artist draws from a core set of concepts skillfully chosen and applied in performance to create a work of art both unique to the artist, and connected to other works of art.

And along the way, we anticipate that students of all ages, and their teachers and mentors, will be inspired to experiment with artistic decision-making themselves.

# What's Inside?

How to Use this Guide .....	i
S.T.A.R. ....	1
About the Teaching Artists .....	2
About Kodo .....	3
SchoolTime Engagement Guide .....	5
Contrast as an Artistic Tool Overview .....	6
Contrast as an Artistic Tool Four Contrasts .....	7
After the Performance .....	9
Classroom Engagement Activities List.....	10
Contrast as an Artistic Tool	
Engagement Activity #1 Light and Darkness .....	11
Engagement Activity #2 Movement and Stillness .....	13
Engagement Activity #3 Sound and Silence .....	15
Engagement Activity #4 Masked and Not Masked Characters .....	17
Engagement Activity #5 Noticing The Four Contrasts .....	19
Engagement Activity #6 Reflecting on the Performance .....	20
Engagement Activity #7 Applying Contrasts With Artistic Intent.....	24





# Your STARRING Role in the Theater



As an audience member, you are a STAR, too. You play an important role. You are an active member of the performance experience—the performers need YOU in order to give you their best work.

## S.T.A.R. Audiences

**S** = Support the artists by being attentive and focusing on the performers..

**T** = Tune in: Listen and watch for understanding. (And for KODO, keep an eye and ear out for how the artists use contrasts!)

**A** = Appreciate the performers by clapping at the right time. For example, when a scene or dance ends, or when the stage lights fade to dark.

**R** = Respect the performers and other audience members. At a performance, you, the other audience members and the performers are sharing this experience together and are part of a performance “community”. Think about ways you can best support the community’s performance experience.

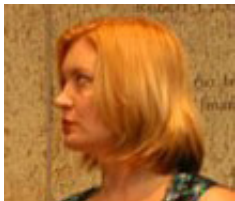
We invite you to be a **STAR** today and to help your classmates shine too.

ENJOY!

# About The Teaching Artists



**Elaine Fong** is a taiko (Japanese drums) performer and teacher, with over 30 years of experience which includes: being the founder of Odaiko New England, (based in Massachusetts); ten years with Soh Daiko in New York; and being a member of the West-Coast based taiko groups Maze Daiko and Kiku Daiko. Ms. Fong has ten years of dance training, and over 20 years of rhythm teaching experience. She has developed educational and programs for K-12 schools; has collaborated with choreographers; and has composed for film and for the theater. Ms. Fong is also a certified Taketina rhythm teacher, advanced level. Her current endeavor, Rhythms in Life ([www.rhythmsinlife.com](http://www.rhythmsinlife.com)) hopes to explore ways to help people reconnect to their innate knowledge of the healing power of primal rhythmic movements and sounds. Ms. Fong has an undergraduate degree from Princeton University, and an MBA from Yale University. Her working career spans the public, private and non-profit sectors.



**Heidi Varian** began performing in feature films, recordings, and live events worldwide with San Francisco Taiko Dojo in the 1980s. Heidi was the first woman and non-Japanese to perform the norito (sacred prayer) at the Suwa Grand Shrine. Heidi incorporated taiko with industrial rock for early Lollapalooza and Burning Man. She has recently appeared with Cake, Bon Jovi, and Imagine Dragons. As a teacher and speaker, Varian has influenced hundreds of North American taiko players through workshops, as a teaching artist with Young Audiences, and by establishing subsidiary groups: Napa Taiko and Ernie Reyes West Coast Action Taiko (California) and Tomodachi Daiko (Alaska). Varian penned *The Way of Taiko* (Stonebridge Press 2005/2013), the first manual in English. The Inkling e-book app was nominated for Best Digital Book Award 2013. Heidi earned an MA in creative writing, was on the literary staff of Arroyo and is an editor at Hip Pocket Press.



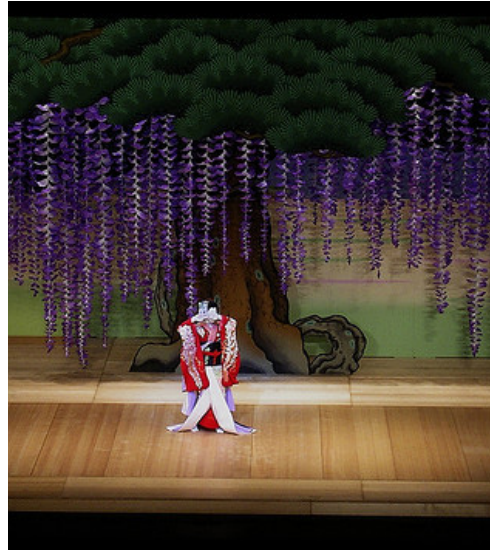
**Janet Koike** began her work in arts education as a dance teacher for Oakland Park and Recreation. She has worked as a teaching artist with Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning through the Arts, the Oakland Museum, and San Jose Taiko as well as her current work as part of Rhythmix Ensemble in Alameda. Janet studied taiko with San Francisco Taiko Dojo and San Jose Taiko, where she composed songs as part of their repertoire. She continues to compose for Emeryville Taiko, Moab Taiko and Odaiko New England's repertoire. As the current artistic director of Maze Daiko, Janet is part of their pioneering mix (maze) of global instrumentation and grooves with the physical elegance of taiko. Maze has collaborated in concerts with Kodo vocalist Yoko Fujimoto, dancer Chieko Kojima and fue player, Kaoru Watanabe, among others, creating taiko fusion concerts all over the world. And as artistic director of Rhythmix Cultural Works, Janet has organized tours to study folkloric music and dance in Cuba and Sada Island (where she studied at the Kodo apprentice center). Over the last 3.5 years over 20,000 people have come together at RCW through culture and the arts.

# About Kodo

*With material from Kodo's website*



Tamasaburo Bando



A Kabuki Performance

[Tamasaburo Bando](#), a famed [Kabuki theater](#) performer who has served as Kodo's Artistic Director for the past two years created the performance [Mystery](#) to engage and delight the audiences' senses. Kabuki and [Taiko](#) are not usual playmates. But Tamasaburo envisioned an infusion of the theatricality of Kabuki into Kodo's powerful Taiko performances.

## Kodo Taiko

In Japanese the word "Kodo" conveys two meanings: "heartbeat," the primal source of all rhythm; and "children of the [drum](#)," a reflection of Kodo performers' desire to play the drums with the heart of a child. The sound of the great taiko is said to resemble a mother's heartbeat as felt in the womb, when babies are often lulled asleep by its thunderous vibrations.

## Kodo's Mission

Kodo strives to both preserve and re-interpret traditional Japanese performing arts. Beyond this, Kodo members collaborate with artists and composers from across the musical spectrum and travel all over the globe to bring back to their home, [Japan's Sado island](#), a kaleidoscope of world music and experiences which then influences the group's performances and compositions.

Kodo's performances consist of three principal elements:

- 1) Pieces based upon traditional Japanese folk arts, learned from local people throughout the country, and reimagined for the stage to capture their universal spirit and energy.
- 2) Compositions created by friends and mentors of Kodo from all around the world (not just Japan).
- 3) Original compositions by Kodo performers themselves.





*Nishimikawazaka on Sado Island, Hasui*



# SchoolTime Engagement Guide

## Kodo One Earth Tour: *Mystery*

How do the director and performers of Kodo use contrasts to evoke a sense of mystery?

One artistic tool used by the artists to create mystery is that of contrasts, including dark and light, sound and silence, movement and stillness. Let's explore some of these contrasts.



# CONTRAST AS AN ARTISTIC TOOL

## Overview



When [Tamasaburo](#), the director of Kodo's show, *Mystery*, talks about his artistic vision—what ideas and concepts he was interested in investigating on stage with the performers, and how he imagined the show would look when it was done—he says he was interested in investigating “the wondrous and sacred ‘mystery’ that lies deep within Japanese folk arts.” That’s why the performance is called *Mystery*. This makes us at Cal Performances wonder how he, as an artist, decided to create a mood of mystery. Tamasaburo says he wants the audience to “experience the mood of mystery that they meet at a temple or a shrine, or when you go into the forest - places that are removed from daily life. A feeling that emerges from deep darkness.”

So Tamasaburo took on the task of creating the mysterious on stage. His tools include understanding a [history of Taiko](#) and the [drums](#), [masks](#) and costumes, [Japanese folk tales](#) and his own experience of the [art of Kabuki](#). He brings these elements together in part by employing a variety of contrasts.

**What is contrast?** Contrast occurs when two elements that are different from one another are used in juxtaposition. The greater the difference, the greater the contrast. Artists like using contrasts because they create new moods and emotions. Contrasts also help tell stories.

We see contrasts every day and they’re not necessarily artistic (even if they are cool) in our every day life. We see sun and shadows, brightness and dimness, large and small contrasts--a thousand contrasts everywhere we look. But it’s the ways that an artist chooses which contrasts matter to them and how they use them in performance that make contrasts such a flexible and important artistic tool.

Though there are dozens of contrasts in the Kodo performance of *Mystery*, we’ve chosen to look more deeply at four of them. Each introduction to a set of contrasts is accompanied by a classroom engagement activity ([#1 thru #4](#)) to explore the dynamics and artistic implications of how the contrast is used on stage. An additional classroom activity ([#5](#)) links you to a promotional video of *Mystery* and invites your students to identify the contrasts they see in the video.

Classroom activity [#6](#) is designed for reflection after the performance. Classroom activity #7 sets up an exercise in artistic decision-making, using contrasts to present short Japanese poems called tanka, giving students the experience of working collaboratiely and seeing the aesthetic effect of contrasts in action.

# Four Contrasts in Kodo's *Mystery*



## Light and darkness

Light and dark on stage are different than light and dark in life. Artists can control how much light, where it is focused, if it is bright or soft and if it moves or stays still. Light helps us know where to focus our attention on stage and during performance, but it is often in the shadowy parts of the stage that something interesting lurks, ready to move toward the light and surprise or delight us.

[To explore this contrast, see Classroom Engagement Activity #1.](#)



## Movement and stillness

Movement happens in all aspects of the Kodo performance, from the powerful lifting and dropping movements of the drummers to the sliding or prancing movements of some of the masked characters. Stillness is an important contrast to movement, and can be seen in small hesitations or pauses as well as longer periods of quiet alertness on the stage. Within movements there are contrasts, too. Movement can be sharp or smooth, light and delicate or heavy and strong, in a straight line or at angles or with curves.

[To explore this contrast, see Classroom Engagement Activity #2.](#)



## Sound and Silence

Take a look at this photo from the Kodo Taiko drummers. Though we can't hear the drum being hit, we can see the tension and anticipation in the drummers' bodies as they prepare in a moment of silence to beat the sound of the large drum. If we could see them in action, we would also be slightly tensed, alert in the silence on the stage that helps us prepare for the sound that is to come. If they held this pose and the silence for a long time, our anticipation would likely increase. Why the silence? What might happen next? What are we feeling and thinking as we wait for the sound?

Sound, of course, comes with all kinds of contrasts of its own. Loud or soft, rapid or slow, heavy or delicate, high- or low-pitched. You'll hear all those contrasts in the Taiko drums and other musical instruments, as well as in the vocalizations the



performers make as they play. These vocalizations are an important part of Taiko and are called *kiai* (pronounced kee-ai). These sounds release the performer's energy and also increase the energy of the other performers.

Perhaps less obvious is the idea that silences have different contrasts too. Silence can last a long time or be a short pause. It can be a peaceful silence, that feels like a deep breath, or an anxious silence waiting for something to happen. Silence gives shapes to sound. If there were no spaces for silence, we wouldn't experience the sounds in the same way. This is true in singing, in speaking and in playing music, as well as in other art forms like dance and theater.

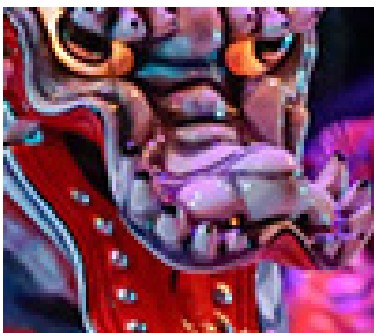
[To explore this contrast, see Classroom Engagement Activity #3.](#)



## Masked and not masked performers

Of course, all the performers are human. Inside the masks and costumes are human performers (something more than one inside a large costume). So the contrast isn't about real people! But the [masks](#) and the costumes create contrasts to the people without masks, who still look like us in the audience and who are often smaller on stage than the people who have the costumes to make them look bigger. The masks are also much more colorful and have exaggerated features, compared to performers without masks.

[To explore this contrast, see Classroom Engagement Activity #4.](#)



After you've discussed, and preferably actively explored, the four kinds of contrast we focus on, try watching the promotional video for the Kodo performance of *Mystery*. In the three minute video, identify places of contrast. Note that some of these pieces may not be presented during the SchoolTime matinee, though similar contrasts will occur in the performance.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iliKiPYvI40>

Of his vision of working with Kodo, Tamasaburo says, "I came up with the idea of a mythical theme when I decided to collaborate with Kodo. I believe that the taiko is an instrument with a primitive sound that originated from tapping objects around you during ancient times. I thought that the ancient myths, the stories of Amaterasu and Susano'o would be appropriate for a taiko group, echoing the ancient sound."

This performance takes you on a voyage to the extraordinary, to a mysterious realm that lies in the beyond. We hope you will enjoy Kodo's latest production, the profound world of "*Mystery*."

# AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

## Reflecting on Your Audience Experience

### Post-Performance Reflection

After the performance of Kodo's *Mystery*, your students would benefit from a reflection on their experience and a discussion or presentation of their discoveries: of the uses of contrast, of the emotions they experienced, of the artistic representation of Japanese folk tales, or of other discoveries that you may have prepared them for.

- This reflection can be done in a circle, with each student contributing a verbal and then a physical presentation of a contrast used or a discovery made.
- It can also be done as a drawing activity, asking students to sketch a physical or emotional representation of a contrast or other discovery.
- Or it can be done as a writing exercise, reviewing the four contrasts we focused on as well as encouraging discovery of other contrasts or emotional and/or intellectual responses.

FOLLOWING REFLECTION and drawing on the exercises in becoming aware of the artistic use of concepts, they might be ready to create a some art of their own. For a rich, hands-on post-performance experience see classroom activity #7: [Applying Contrasts with Artistic Intent](#). In this activity, the deceptively simple Japanese poem form, tanka, provides short texts around which students can make choices for movement, stillness, sound, silence, masked and unmasked characters. This activity aims to develop awareness of the artists' decision-making process and promote ensemble skills in cooperative presentations.



# CLASSROOM ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



## Pre-Performance

- 1 Contrast As An Artistic Tool: **Light and Darkness**
- 2 Contrast As An Artistic Tool: **Movement and Stillness**
- 3 Contrast As An Artistic Tool: **Sound and Silence**
- 4 Contrast As An Artistic Tool: **Masked and Unmasked Characters**
- 5 Contrast As An Artistic Tool: **Kodo Video**

## Post-Performance

- 6 Contrast As An Artistic Tool: **Reflection Activity**
- 7 Contrast As An Artistic Tool: **Applying Contrast with Artistic Intent**



# CONTRAST AS AN ARTISTIC TOOL: LIGHT AND DARKNESS

## ENGAGEMENT #1



### Light and darkness

Light and dark on stage are different than light and dark in life. Artists can control how much light, where it is focused, if it is bright or soft and if it moves or stays still. Light helps us know where to focus our attention on stage and during performance, but it is often in the shadowy parts of the stage that something interesting lurks, ready to move toward the light and surprise or delight us.

### Guiding Questions

- What effects can be created by using light and darkness?
- How can we use the contrast between light and darkness to create a mood or evoke an emotion?

### Artistic Literacy Tool Box

Contrast as an artistic tool: light and darkness

Focus

### Overview

Time needed: 10 minutes (can be extended with layers of exploration)

Students will explore the contrast between light and darkness in their classroom or multipurpose room, and reflect briefly on their emotional qualities.

### Supplies and Prep

A classroom or other room, with a dimmer light if possible.

Flashlights (one or more, depending upon length of engagement)

### Instructions

- STEP 1** Turn on all the lights in the room and ask students to look around and notice the objects and people in the room, notice their own emotions and thoughts. Do any objects stand out in the light?
- STEP 2** If possible, dim the lights (if you have a dimmer switch and can dim the lights to several different levels, even better) and invite students to observe the room as well as their emotions and thoughts with each dimming.
- STEP 3** Turn off all the lights completely so that the room is as dark as possible and have students look around and see what they notice. (Allow some time so their eyes can adjust to the dark.) Is your emotion or mood different?

## Engagement Activity #1 ...continued

- STEP 4** If desired, return some light to the room for discussion. Ask: How does the light and darkness affect what we see of the room and the objects within it? What mood, emotions or thoughts emerged in the fully lit room, then in the dimly lit room and finally in the completely dark room? Why might one's mood or emotions shift with the changing light?
- STEP 5** Give one or more students a flashlight and ask them to turn it on after the room has returned to darkness. When the room is dark again, ask them turn the flashlight on, aiming up or down and away from eyes and faces.

How does the beam of light change the mood or atmosphere in the room? Invite the student to experiment with the flashlight's beam. What's it like when the student is moving the flashlight's beam or moving around the room with the flashlight? What's it like when the beam is completely still and focused on something?

- STEP 6** If there's time, ask the students to discuss with a partner how light and dark affected their emotions. Share discoveries with the group and/or take notes on chartpad paper or board.
- STEP 7** Final note to your class: Artists on stage use light and dark to do two important things: one is to help us know where to focus and what we might want to be looking at. The other is to change the mood on the stage, to make us curious or even a little anxious about what might be in the shadowy part of the stage. We will notice light and darkness on the stage when we go to see Kodo perform *Mystery* at Cal Performances.

# CONTRAST AS AN ARTISTIC TOOL: MOVEMENT AND STILLNESS

## ENGAGEMENT #2



### Movement and stillness

Movement happens in all aspects of the Kodo performance, from the powerful lifting and dropping movements of the drummers to the sliding or prancing movements of some of the masked characters. Stillness is an important contrast to movement, and can be seen in small hesitations or pauses as well as longer periods of quiet alertness on the stage. Within movements there are contrasts, too. Movement can be sharp or smooth, light and delicate or heavy and strong, in a straight line or at angles or with curves.

### Guiding Questions

- What is the difference between movement and stillness?
- What kind of energy or tension happens when you go between movement and stillness that makes the contrast so powerful?
- How can we use our bodies to investigate this question?

### Artistic Literacy Tool Box

Contrast as an artistic tool: movement and stillness focus  
Choice-making as an artist

### Overview

Time needed: 15 minutes (can be extended with layers of exploration).

Students will explore the contrast between movement and stillness in their classroom or multipurpose room, and reflect briefly on the energy or tension between the two states.

### Supplies and Prep

Writing materials for students (journal, paper, writing implements)  
Open space for moving and performing.

### Instructions

- STEP 1** Standing together in a circle, ask your students to center their bodies, drop their arms to their sides, and stand with their feet planted shoulder-width apart. By way of warm up, explore movements of the head and shoulders, the arms and hands, hips and legs, feet and ankles. Note that movement can come from any part of our bodies.
- STEP 2:** Ask a student volunteer to take one step into the circle and demonstrate a simple movement that everyone will be able to repeat, using one or two parts of their bodies that will finish by stopping and being still. Everyone in the circle repeat the movement and the stillness of the demonstrating student. Go around the circle for everyone to demonstrate a movement or choose a few other students to do a demo.



**Coach for simplicity:** if the movements are too complicated, ask them to repeat just the first or last part of the movement then come to a stop. If the movements are silly, say that laughing is fine, as long as everyone stays focused on repeating the movement.

**STEP 3** Move together as a class: before stepping out of the circle and using the entire “playing area,” tell students they will be moving around the whole room in a moment, exploring different kinds of movement like performers do before they create a show. Let them know they are to move safely and making no physical contact with each other when you call out “Move” and to stop and hold still when you call out “Hold.” Then open up the playing area and coach students to experiment with different kinds of movement by calling out the first prompt: “Move.”

**Coach for variety:** big and small (using their whole bodies, or one tiny part of their body), jerky and fluid, fast and slow, close to the ground and as high as they can reach. At various moments, call out “Hold!” and when the students have stopped moving, coach them: “Hold still but breathe. Don’t move but relax. Wait for the next prompt.” Then prompt them to move again by calling out “Move.” Do this several times with reminders to explore various movements and calling out “Hold. Breathe, relax, wait.”

**STEP 4** Form the class circle again, and ask students to reflect on how they felt when they were moving and then were asked to hold. How did it feel to hold and wait for the next prompt? Did they notice any difference in their feelings when they were moving or holding still?

**STEP 5** Divide the class so that half stay in the circle as observers and half move into the playing area, moving and holding as coached. The “movers” should experiment with different types of movement. Call “Hold!” at various times, reminding students to breathe, relax and wait while holding. Ask the observers to notice the differences between the various movements and the various kinds of stillness. Rotate groups so each has a chance to move/freeze and to observe.

**STEP 6** Discuss together what students observed and experienced. What was it like to see the different types of contrasting movements and stillness? How did it feel to move as others around you were still, or vice versa?

**STEP 7** If there’s time, ask the students to discuss with a partner the contrast between movement and stillness and the tension or energy that arises when going from movement to stillness and vice versa. Share discoveries with the group and/or take notes on chartpad paper or board.

**Final note to your class:** Artists on stage use movement and stillness for many reasons: to help tell the story what’s happening onstage and to establish a sense of place, event and atmosphere, as well as to heighten the drama and suspense at certain moments and show the energy and/or tension between characters. We will notice many types of contrasts of movement and stillness on the stage when we go to see Kodo perform *Mystery* at Cal Performances.

# CONTRAST AS AN ARTISTIC TOOL: SOUND AND SILENCE

## ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY #3



### Sound and Silence

Look at this photo from Kodo. We can't hear the drum, but we can see the tension and anticipation in the drummers' bodies as they prepare in a moment of silence to beat the sound of the large drum. If we could see them in action, we would also be slightly tensed, that helps us prepare for the sound that is to come. If they held this silence for a long time, our anticipation would likely increase. Why the silence? What might happen next? What are we feeling and thinking as we wait for the sound?

### Guiding Questions

How do silence and sound work together to create anticipation or an emotional mood?

### Artistic Literacy Tool Box

Contrast as an artistic tool: sound and silence

Volume (loud and soft)

Pitch (high and low)

Tempo (slow and fast)

### Overview

Time needed: 10 minutes (can be extended with layers of exploration)

Students will explore the contrast between sound and silence in artistic practice.

### Supplies and Prep

A space for movement.

### Instructions

- STEP 1** Tell the class that you are going to work together to create a soundscape that they will all contribute to and that you will conduct. Demonstrate some gestures you choose to establish with the students how you will ask them to make their sounds “Louder” or “Softer” “Slower” or “Faster”, and a specific gesture for “Silence”. Practice using the signals while your students hum together. (After you model conducting, you can choose a student volunteer to conduct.)
- STEP 2** Sitting in a circle, ask each student to create a unique sound of their own. They can all make their individual sound at the same time or you can go around the circle and share one by one. Sounds can be made vocally or on their bodies, for example, clapping, tapping on their bodies, stomping. Ask students to make the sound all together after you count to three. Experiment with conducting them.
- STEP 3** As you conduct, have students experiment with volume and tempo. In addition, play with silences, e.g., ask half the group, all but two students, the whole group to be silent at various times.

### Engagement Activity #3 ...continued

- STEP 4** Still in your circle ask students to create the sounds of the beginnings of a rainstorm and slowly build to a huge storm. (Again, they can vocalize or create sounds with their bodies.) They can amplify their sounds to create a rainstorm. Conduct the rainstorm so that it builds in volume and intensity and decreases to silence.
- STEP 5** If there is time, ask for ideas for situations where a soundscape can be created: a desert at night, the ocean, a park in springtime. Ask students to contribute sounds to the soundscape, and experiment with various lengths of silence. Story ideas can be added to a silence: “Silence” gesture, then coaching them to “Hold your silence while a large bird flies overhead, watching it circle to see if it will attack. When the bird flies on, slowly begin your soundscape again, layering in one sound at a time.”

In Kodo’s performance of *Mystery*, we’ll hear all kinds of sounds punctuated by all kinds of silence. Let’s notice how these different contrasts make us feel as we watch the show.

# CONTRAST AS AN ARTISTIC TOOL: MASKED AND NOT MASKED CHARACTERS

## ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY #4



### Masked and not masked performers

Of course, all the performers are human. Inside the masks and costumes are human performers (something more than one inside a large costume). So the contrast isn't about real people! But the [masks](#) and the costumes create contrasts to the people without masks, who still look like us in the audience and who are often smaller on stage than the people who have the costumes to make them look bigger.

### Guiding Questions

- What emotions can a mask or costume create?
- How can we use the contrast between human faces and masks to create a mood or evoke an emotion?

### Artistic Literacy Tool Box

Contrast as an artistic tool: the human face and masked character

Animate

Emotion

Heightened Expression

### Overview

Time needed: 10 minutes (can be extended with layers of exploration)

Students will explore the contrast between expressing an emotion in human form and evoking it in masked form.

### Supplies and Prep

A space for movement.

Masks (as simple as pre-made paper plate masks or commercial masks for Halloween or more complex masks if you have them).

### Instructions

**STEP 1** Ask students about their own experiences with masks. Have they ever worn them? How does it make them feel when they wear a mask or disguise? Have they ever been moved to laughter by a mask or been scared by a mask? Remind them that behind every mask in the Kodo show they will see, there is a human artist dancing or singing to animate the mask.

**STEP 2** In a circle, ask students to demonstrate all at the same time a human emotion, such as surprise. What is your face doing to show surprise? What does your body do? Try such other human characteristics as: curiosity. Anger. Fear. Amusement. Wonder.



## CONTRAST AS AN ARTISTIC TOOL: MASKED AND UNMASKED CHARACTERS

### Engagement Activity #4 ...continued

- STEP 3** Repeat each of the human emotions, making each one exceptionally large, exaggerated and loud. These are all things human performers can do to show big emotions.
- STEP 4** Show the masks you have available and invite students to try them on. Ask them to demonstrate emotions as they did for humans: Surprise. Curiosity. Anger. Fear. Amusement. Wonder. Since they can't use their faces, which are covered by masks, what else must they do to show the emotion.
- STEP 5** When we see someone in a mask, what questions do we have? What emotions might be evoked when we don't see the human face? What might we anticipate could happen next, just because we see a mask?
- STEP 6** If there's time, ask the students to discuss with a partner how being masked or seeing masked characters affected their mood or emotions. Share discoveries with the group and/or take notes on chartpad paper or board. Alternatively, ask students to write down their guesses about what they might be seeing at the performance of Kodo's *Mystery*, and revisit these guesses after the SchoolTime show.
- STEP 7** Final note to your class: The Kodo artists will sometimes wear masks to evoke a character that is not human, even though humans are inside the masks. We will notice interactions between masked (unreal, mystical) and human characters, and will have different emotional responses to the masked character, depending upon what they do and how the human performers interact with them. The artists will make different decisions to point out the contrast between the masked character and the human characters, including contrasts using light and darkness, sound and silence, and movement and stillness.

We'll be watching for all these contrasts we go to see Kodo's *Mystery* at Cal Performances.

## CONTRAST AS AN ARTISTIC TOOL: NOTICING THE FOUR CONTRASTS

### ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY #5



After you've discussed, and preferably actively explored, the four kinds of contrast we focus on, try watching the promotional video for the Kodo performance of *Mystery*. In the three minute video, identify places of contrast. Note that some of these pieces may not be presented during the SchoolTime matinee, though similar contrasts will occur in the performance.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iliKiPYvl40>

## REFLECTING ON YOUR AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE

### POST-PERFORMANCE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY #6

After the performance of Kodo's *Mystery*, your students would benefit from a reflection on their experience and a discussion or presentation of their discoveries: of the uses of contrast, of the emotions they experienced, of the artistic representation of Japanese folks tales, or of other discoveries that you may have prepared them for.

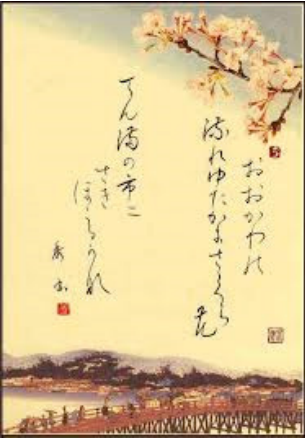
- This reflection can be done in a circle, with each student contributing a verbal and then a physical presentation of a contrast used or a discovery made.
- It can also be done as a drawing activity, asking students to sketch a physical or emotional representation of a contrast or other discovery.
- Or it can be done as a writing exercise, reviewing the four contrasts we focused on as well as encouraging discovery of other contrasts or emotional and/or intellectual responses.

FOLLOWING REFLECTION and drawing on the exercises in becoming aware of the artistic use of concepts, they might be ready to create a some art of their own. For a rich, hands-on post-performance experience see classroom activity #7: [Applying Contrasts with Artistic Intent](#). In this activity, the deceptively simple Japanese poem form, tanka, provides short texts around which students can make choices for movement, stillness, sound, silence, masked and unmasked characters. This activity aims to develop awareness of the artists' decision-making process and promote ensemble skills in cooperative presentations.



# APPLYING CONTRASTS WITH ARTISTIC INTENT

## POST-PERFORMANCE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY #7



### Guiding Questions:

How can you use contrasts like an artist to create a performance or visual work of art using a Japanese tanka (poem) as your text? How do contrasts in light and dark, movement and stillness, sound and silence, and masked and not masked characters help you tell the story you want to tell?

### Artistic Literacy Tool Box

Contrast as an artistic tool  
Ensemble

Timing  
Collaboration

### Overview

Time needed: 1 to 3 class periods (depending upon depth of engagement you desire)

Students will use contrasts to create a presentation. Students will review contrasts in the activities leading to this composition. Students will also be introduced to tanka, a Japanese poem that is composed of five poetic phrases, such as a descriptive fragment or a single word that adds to the story or image the poet is creating. The poems selected here for this activity were written in English, using English guidelines for tanka (Japanese tanka follow structures more meaningful in the Japanese language). For more on tanka, see website\*. Students will work in ensemble groups and present their artistic choices using contrasts to one another. Journaling and reflection will strengthen this activity.

### Supplies and Prep

- Writing surface (blackboard, whiteboard, chart pad paper) and markers
- Writing materials for students (journal, paper, writing implements)
- Optional: flashlights or other ways to create a light versus dark contrast
- Drums or percussion sticks to help create rhythm for presentations (can be used by teacher, guest artist, or individual group). Clapping, stomping and other body music can also be used to create rhythms.
- Masks or costume pieces of any type, for groups to highlight non-human characters

### Instructions

**STEP 1** Review contrasts as an artistic tool (Artistic Literacy Activities 1 thru 4) by writing them on the board and asking for brief reflections on when they saw the contrasts in the Kodo performance of *Mystery*. If journaling is an option, ask the students to write what they remember before sharing them out loud.

Light and darkness      Movement and stillness      Sound and Silence  
Masked and Not Masked characters

**STEP 2** Brainstorm ways contrasts might be used by your students if they were going to create a performance or design a work of visual art (e.g., painting, poster, collage).



## Engagement Activity #7 ...continued

Give an example, such as: move quickly, then freeze like a statue for 3 seconds, then move slowly to sit on the floor.

This would give multiple layers of contrast: movement and stillness, quick movement and slow movement, standing up and changing levels by sitting down.

Write on the large board as many ideas about contrast as you can.

**STEP 3** Explain to your students that can use any of the tools they just thought of, or new ideas that come to them, as they create their own performances using contrasts.

Divide the class into groups of 3-5 students. These groups are now “ensembles” like Kodo is—a group of artistic collaborators working together to tell a story or share an idea.

Tanka: Give an overview of tanka, as detailed as you wish. A 2 minute orientation is sufficient to launch the exercise, but if desired, you can spend up to an entire classroom session on tanka as a writing activity. (For more on tanka, see \_\_\_\_). Tanka is a form of Japanese poetry that has five phrases, adding up to create an image or tell a small story.

**STEP 4** Assign a tanka to each ensemble, or pass out the appropriate Tanka Texts page and let each ensemble choose the story they will tell, depending upon the number of class sessions dedicated to the activity.

Refer to the board for the types of contrasts the ensembles might use, asking them to use at least three of the four (or all four if you desire). Or pass out the Contrasts as an Artistic Tool page for each group or student to have as a reference.

**STEP 5** FOR PRESENTATION: Create an atmosphere of rehearsal and problem solving for 18-25 minutes. Give regular updates on how much time is left. Students should use 8-10 minutes to understand their tanka and 10-12 minutes to practice it. Making decisions quickly and just going with your best idea is part of the artistic process! If you are dedicating several class sessions to this activity, rehearsal can be expanded and additional elements added.

Give each ensemble their own space in the classroom to work together as a small group. They might:

- a. Read the tanka silently to themselves. Then read the tanka out loud to one another.
- b. Discuss what images are in the tanka (apply any language skills currently being taught, e.g. parts of speech, grammar, metaphor, etc.)
- c. Stand up and explore use of contrasts, speaking the tanka text with contrasting sound (soft/loud, fast/slow, sharp/smooth) and moving their bodies in contrasting ways (high/low, fast/slow, movement/stillness).
- d. Make flashlights and percussion instruments available.
- e. Make masks and/or costume pieces (animal ears, tails, gloves, etc.) available.
- f. Encourage rehearsing and changing things as they go.
- g. If percussion instruments are not available, encourage clapping, stomping or body music to make a rhythm to go with the presentation.

## Engagement Activity #7 ...continued

If you prefer to making visual arts works using contrasts, please consult with your school arts specialist or visual arts teaching artist, if available. Or go for it—design your own activity using contrasts with your students!

**Coaching Notes:** Regular reminders to choose contrasts to highlight an emotion or part of the story are helpful.

Remind students to speak the text as they rehearse.

Students may choose to divide up performance roles. One student might read the whole text, or the text can be divided among all the performers. One might do all the movement and another provide rhythm accompaniment. Everyone should be able to make a contribution.

Time is always a challenge! Remind students that all performers have time limits—the show goes on at a specific time and place and they just have to do it.

All presentations should be identified as experiments or works in progress. They are intended to be evaluated based solely on presenting an understanding of contrasts as an artistic tool.

**STEP 6** Present works in progress. All presentations are “experiments in making artistic choices,” and should not be called “performances” or final products.

Create a space in the classroom that is the “presentation space.” Ask each ensemble to move into the space to present. Ask everyone to give the attention and support to each ensemble, because all artists need support when they are showing their experiments. The presenting ensemble may wish to consult with one another one last time before presenting.

Ask the ensemble to form a circle first and to take a deep breath together. If you participated in the Cal Performances in the Classroom workshop, have them execute the bow (name). Tell them if anyone starts laughing or messes up, that’s okay, it’s part of art-making. Just keep going and be supportive of one another.

After each group presents, all students should applaud. Ask the presenting ensemble to reflect a moment. Did that go as you planned? Which contrast was your favorite?

After the final group, the entire classroom is asked to applaud for one another and for themselves.

If journaling is an option, provide time for each student to write or draw an individual reflection:

1. What were they most excited about when using contrasts for making art?
2. What was most confusing?
3. If they were going to do it again, what might they do differently?
4. What are they curious about now that they have experienced how artists might use contrasts to make their art?
5. What do they wish they could tell or ask the Kodo performers about their work now that they’ve seen the show and made some art of their own using contrasts?

For discussion, ask if anyone cares to share anything they wrote.

## TANKA TEXTS FOR CONTRAST ACTIVITIES

an alligator  
ate Aunt Annie's apples—  
apple-less,  
angry Aunt Annie  
ate an alligator  
by Bob Lucky

the trees undress now  
discarding their finery  
they wait in silence  
to be wrapped in a blanket  
as they dream of warming spring  
by Holle Abee

I miss all my friends  
from the school before this one  
I must start over  
like these trees, Grandma says  
making new leaves each year  
by Elizabeth Bodien

one frog  
two frogs, three frogs  
bullfrogs  
croak, croak, croak  
three dead frogs  
by Alexis Rotella

I make monsters  
into meatballs  
I eat them  
with sauce, cheese  
and toasted bread  
by Mary Beth Hatem

late to class  
my new sneakers squeak  
on the wooden floor  
the p. e. teacher looks up  
. . . nowhere to hide  
by Diane Mayr

climbing the hill  
on the way home from school  
I spot four deer grazing  
I hold very still  
and pretend I'm in Africa  
by Peggy Heinrich

sometimes  
it is hard to listen—  
can you hear the stars  
hanging on to every word  
the moon has to say?  
by Claire Everett

A cool wind blows in  
With a blanket of silence.  
Straining to listen  
For those first few drops of rain,  
The storm begins in earnest.  
by Dendrobia

I will sing a song  
for my pet octopus, Pete.  
He likes all my songs.  
Now, what will I sing today?  
He loves songs about the sea.  
by Gabriel Rosenstock

the winter squirrel  
eyes bright twitching  
has come to be fed  
happiness  
one large English walnut  
by Dave Austin

## Older Grades

<http://www.poetrysoup.com/poems/tanka#poems> and  
<http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-tanka-poetry.html>

Sunlight filtering  
Verdant through whispering leaves  
And groaning branches.  
Wind's tempestuous rhythm  
Breathes life into the forest  
by John Bankson

Forward moving train;  
Mystical cacophony;  
Draws me backwards.  
Riding time-tracks, I can see  
History reverse itself.  
by M.L. Kiser

busy hands scrubbing  
soapy determination  
eliminating  
all evidence of a meal  
to remember forever  
by Scott Thirtyseven

a single cicada  
ushers in the summer  
once again  
making the calendar  
one of empty squares  
by Kala Ramesh

Beautiful Jasmine  
Sweet smells of all it attracts  
Trimming vine and trashed  
Bee so sneaky, stung my neck  
Living residence disturbed  
by Eve Roper

Emotion's color  
pure innocent petals  
blushing up at love  
smiling laughter on the wind  
A happy field of daisies.  
by Melani Udaeta

with telegram  
awaits the old man at post office  
the grief soaked paper  
sends the message to darkness  
over the coffee mixed with tears  
by H. Gene Murtha

I mingle  
with the vastness  
in my dream  
caressing the tenderness of  
the sea, calmness of the sky  
by Pravat Kumar Padhy

Near the sloping hills  
Adorning garments of Spring  
A rich golden stream  
Flows through the luscious valley  
Like Daffodils in the breeze  
by Jon London

### Background note:

Tanka: a short lyric poem originally from Japan, composed of five poetic phrases, typically written on five lines in English. In Japanese they follow a syllable count of 5-7-5-7-7. Because of significant differences between the Japanese and English languages, tanka poets writing in English do not usually count syllables.

Example: In English, the word 'stretch' is one syllable, but in Japanese, it is five syllables: s-t-re-t-ch. This is because Japanese actually counts morae (sound units), not syllables. Note that Japanese counts sound units differently than English, too.



# Additional Resources

[Teaching Artist Materials for Cal Performances in the Classroom Teacher Workshop \(held on Saturday, January 10, 2015\).](#)

## Web Site

Kodo

[www.kodo.or.jp](http://www.kodo.or.jp)

## Video Clips

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyGaK1FR6gU&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyGaK1FR6gU&feature=player_embedded)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNBBMXmnEqk&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usxt4z4Ns60&feature=related>

## Japanese Culture and History:

<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/>

<http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e641.html>

## Books

- The Bee and the Dream: A Japanese Tale. Retold by Jan Freeman Long, illustrated by Kaoru Ono. 1996.
- Japanese Children's Favorite Stories. Edited by Florence Sakade, illustrated by Yoshisuke Kurosaki. 1958
- Modern Japan: An Idea Book for K-12. Publication Manager. Edited by Mary Hammond Bernson and Betsy Goolian. 1992.
- Taiko. By Eiji Yoshikawa, translated by William Scott Wilson. 1992.
- The Way of Taiko. by Heidi Varian. 2005

## DVDs

Kodo - One Earth Tour Special, 2005.

Kodo: Live at Acropolis, 2002.

## Local venues featuring Japanese Culture:

Japanese Tea Garden at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco

<http://japaneseteagardensf.com/>

Asian Art Museum

<http://www.asianart.org/>

200 Larkin Street, San Francisco

Japan Society

<http://www.usajapan.org>

Japanese Cultural & Community Center

<http://www.jccnc.org>

1840 Sutter Street, San Francisco

You can find more information and activities in Cal Performances' 2011 SchoolTime Guide for Kodo:

<http://calperformances.org/learn/k-12/pdf/2010/KodoStudyGuide1011.pdf>

**Cal Performances thanks the following donors for their gifts in support of our Education and Community Programs:**

Anonymous (3)  
Another Planet Entertainment: Gregg and Laura Perloff  
Bank of America  
Bell Investment Advisors  
Jesse and Laren Brill  
Earl and June Cheit  
The Clorox Company Foundation  
Diana Cohen and Bill Falik  
Robert Cooter and Blair Dean  
Deborah Duncan and Mr. Barnett Lipton  
The Fremont Group Foundation  
The Germanacos Foundation  
Sally L Glaser and David Bower  
Jane Gottesman and Geoffrey Biddle  
Susan Graham Harrison and Michael A. Harrison  
Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund  
Walter & Elise Haas Fund  
Kaiser Permanente  
Thomas J. Long Foundation  
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation  
Maris and Ivan Meyerson  
Carol and Joe Neil  
Kim Polese  
Quest Foundation  
Kenneth and Frances Reid  
Gail and Daniel Rubinfeld  
Sam Mazza Foundation  
Linda and Will Schieber  
Barclay and Sharon Simpson  
Nadine Tang and Bruce Smith  
U.S. Bank  
Wells Fargo  
Zellerbach Family Foundation

For information on supporting our Education and Community Programs, contact, Sarah Sobey  
Phone: 510.643.7053  
Email: [ssobey@calperformances.org](mailto:ssobey@calperformances.org)

## About Cal Performances and Cal Performances in the Classroom

The mission of Cal Performances is to inspire, nurture and sustain a lifelong appreciation for the performing arts. Cal Performances, the performing arts presenter of the University of California, Berkeley, fulfills this mission by presenting, producing and commissioning outstanding artists, both renowned and emerging, to serve the University and the broader public through performances and education and community programs. Cal Performances celebrates over 100 years on the UC Berkeley Campus.

Our Cal Performances in the Classroom and SchoolTime program cultivates an early appreciation for and understanding of the performing arts amongst our youngest audiences. Workshops and classroom visits prepare students for deeper engagement when they experience hour-long, daytime performances by the same world-class artists who perform as part of the main season. Cal Performances in the Classroom and SchoolTime have become an integral part of the academic year for teachers and students throughout the Bay Area.

*Cal Performances in the Classroom* educational materials were written, edited and designed by Sabrina Klein, Rica Anderson, and David McCauley, with text adapted from KODO's materials.

© Copyright 2015 Cal Performances

## **Additional Information Accessed by the Engagement Guide's Internal Links**



# Tamasaburo Bando



Tamasaburo Bando is a leading Kabuki actor, and the most popular and celebrated *onnagata* (an actor specializing in female roles) currently on stage. His profound aesthetic sense has been demonstrated across numerous platforms and he has received acclaim for his direction of stage productions and films. In April 2012, Bando assumed the position of Kodo's artistic director. In September 2012, he was recognized as an Important Intangible Cultural Property Holder (Living National Treasure).

In 2006, the first on-stage collaboration between Tamasaburo Bando and Kodo was realized in *Amaterasu*, a musical dance play based on a Japanese myth. It featured Bando as the sun goddess Amaterasu and Kodo as the gods of the story who express themselves through music and dance. This performance was a catalyst for Kodo to break new ground in both taiko and theatrical expression. That same year, Bando became Kodo's artistic director and his first new work, Kodo One Earth Tour 2012–2013: *Legend* toured throughout Japan and the US through 2013.

For more information on Tamasaburo Bando, go to the following sites:

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/culture/2014/11/12/stage/inside-kingdom-kodo/#.VKsVeU0tCiM>





**View Kodo promotional video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iliKiPYvI40>

# Kabuki Theater



Kabuki is a traditional type of Japanese theater dating from the 1600s that includes drama and dance. Kabuki performances are highly stylized and often feature fantastical storylines and lavish costumes. Meant to be enjoyed as an all-day event, a Kabuki play can happen over the course of a day, or multiple plays are combined to form a full-day repertoire. Performances usually have five acts: a slow opening, followed by three acts that speed up the action and a short concluding fifth act.

The three main types of Kabuki performances include:

**Jidaimono:** historical pieces often depicting stories of samurai,

**Sewamono:** more modern works that focus on commoners, and

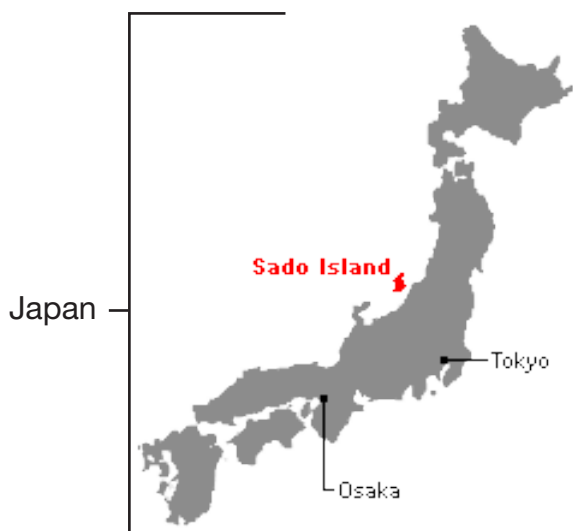
**Shosagoto:** primarily dance pieces.

More information on Kabuki theater at: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kabuki>

[\(Return to main page\)](#)



# Sado Island Origin of Kodo



## Where Kodo lives and Why that Matters

### Kodo's Home: Sado Island

Sado Island slide show:

<http://en.japantravel.com/photos/sado-island>

Kodo describes Sado Island as, “the extraordinary place where nature’s changing seasons, traditional ways of life and the island’s performing arts still thrive today. This island has been our home since 1971 and is the fountain of our inspiration and the guiding force behind our creative lifestyle. Our goal is to find a harmonious balance between people and the natural world.”

“Each time we venture off the island we encounter new people, customs, and traditional performing arts that are ingrained in the lifestyles of each locale. Both similarities and differences prompt us to take pause and reflect upon the importance of the varied and rich cultures that color our world. These life lessons permeate our very skin and become an invisible source of our expression.

It is through this process of Living, Learning, and Creating that we cultivate a unique aesthetic and sensitivity, reaching out toward a new world culture rooted in the rich possibilities of a peaceful coexistence between humanity and nature.”

For more information on Sado Island go to:

[http://www.kodo.or.jp/general/village\\_en.html](http://www.kodo.or.jp/general/village_en.html)



Top: Map of Japan showing location of Sado Island

Center: Japanese painting,  
“View of Aikawa cho on Sado Island by Hasui Kawase

Bottom: “Fishing Village in Kita-Katabe Sado Island”  
Photo by Todd Stratford



“As a percussion, is the most primitive instrument and it may have been used for communication or religious rituals. In feudal Japan, was often used to motivate troops, to call out orders or announcements or to set a marching pace.”

## About Taiko Drumming

The word taiko means “big drum” in Japanese. It also refers to all drums used in classical Japanese music and to the drummers who play them. Taiko come in all shapes and sizes, from the huge o-daiko to the small shime-daiko.

## Origins of Taiko

Drums similar to Japanese taiko were introduced from China and Korea around the 4th century. Taiko became known as the voice of Buddha with the power to spread wisdom, compassion, truth and beauty through its rhythms.

According to Japanese myth, the sun goddess once hid herself in a cave causing the world to go dark. In an attempt to coax her out, the goddess Ame no Uzume danced, stomping her feet on a wooden tub. The loud drumming drew the sun goddess out of the cave, bringing light to the world again.

## Uses of Taiko

Taiko has played a number of important roles in Japanese culture and traditions, with specific kinds of drums used for different events.

**In warfare:** Loud enough to be heard during battle, taiko was used in wars to inspire soldiers, frighten the enemy and issue commands.

**At Imperial Court:** Gagaku, one of the oldest styles of court music featured taiko drums and was performed in castles and shrines across Japan.



***In Performing Arts:*** Used in traditional Japanese theater like Noh and Kabuki, taiko sets a mood or recreates sounds of weather and nature.

***In Daily Life:*** In villages, taiko was central to many folk festivals. Farmers believed its thunder-like sound brought rain to their fields. Drumming signaled when men went to hunt and when storms were coming.

Taiko was also used to determine the borders of villages. Since a village was only as large as the sound of their drums could travel, villages tried to create the loudest drums and have the best players.

***In Spiritual Practice:*** In the Shinto belief system, spirits live in all natural things including the mountains, water, fire and animals. The taiko's "voice" called these gods when praying and giving thanks. Priests also used taiko to drive away pests, illness and evil spirits.

For more information on taiko and its history, go to:

[http://www.taiko.com/taiko\\_resource/history.html](http://www.taiko.com/taiko_resource/history.html)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiko>



## Types of Taiko Drums

Taiko drums are beautifully crafted, hand- made instruments. The Asano family, one of the oldest and most respected drum makers in Japan, has been building taiko for nearly 400 years. Like many other artistic and cultural traditions, the art of building taiko is carefully passed down from generation to generation.

While there are many types and variations of taiko, these instruments are most frequently seen at taiko performances.

### Nagadou-daiko

The nagado-daiko (long-bodied taiko) is the most popular drum used in the modern kumi-daiko style of playing. It is common at festivals and in temples and shrines (where it is called miya-daiko.) Its sound is characteristically deep and reverberant. This drum can be placed on various stands for different styles of playing.



### O-daiko

The largest drum in the ensemble, O-daiko literally means “big fat drum” and some o-daiko can reach huge proportions. It is made out of a hollowed tree trunk, over which a cow hide is stretched and tacked down. The larger the drum body, the deeper the sound. O-daiko are typically placed on a stand and played horizontally, often by two people at the same time. Usually, one player beats out a basic rhythm while the other solos. Often built for shrines and temples, mammoth o-daiko can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and take the builder years to complete.

### O-kedo

Believed to be the oldest taiko style drum, the body of the o-kedo is made from staves or planks rather than a solid piece of wood. It is easier to carry because the skin is roped rather than tacked. These drums are about six feet long and three feet in diameter and are usually raised up on a high stand and played horizontally. Short bodied O-kedo, which are light enough to be carried and played while dancing, are becoming increasingly popular. These may be struck with slats of bamboo to produce a sharp slapping sound.



### Shime-daiko

Similar to the o-kedo in that the skins are attached by rope rather than tacked, shime-daiko are much smaller with a high, sharp sound. In taiko groups, the shime-daiko is often used to keep the basic rhythm and establish time, but it is a versatile solo instrument as well. It has a one piece body carved out of hardwood, and the shell is often beautifully lacquered and decorated.

### Uchiwa

This hand-held drum is shaped like a paddle or fan (uchiwa means fan). Often seen in parades and festivals, temple monks originally used it to keep time while they chanted.



### Bachi

Bachi are sticks used to play the drums. Large drums are played with large bachi, small drums with small bachi. These sticks are often made from a dense wood such as oak.



*When the word taiko is used in a compound word situation, the “t” changes to a “d.”*

For more information on taiko drums, go to:

<http://taikoskin.blogspot.com/2010/04/types-of-taiko-drums-part-i.html>

[\(Return to main page\)](#)

# Japanese Masks



Shishi-mai (Lion Dance) Mask

Since the Stone Age, masks have been worn in nearly all cultures: as a form of disguise, in theater performances (often to illustrate a character's qualities), in religious ceremonies, as part of membership in a secret society, as punishment for a criminal or in celebration of a holiday.

In Japanese culture, masks representing heroes, deities, devils, ghosts or animals have been used since ancient times in magic rituals, religious dances, shamanistic ceremonies, medicinal treatments, funerals and as talismans. Archaeological evidence indicates masks made of clay or cloth were used in Japan early as 10,000 B.C.

## Gigaku

The oldest extant masks of Japan are those used in gigaku, an ancient dance in the form of a drama set to music. According to legend, gigaku arrived in Japan from Korea in the 7th Century. The gigaku mask covered the entire head and was most often made from wood carved into dramatic representations of lions, birds, demons and other superhuman creatures.

## Bugaku

Bugaku masks were worn as part of performances in traditional court music that reached the height of their popularity in the 9th Century. Traditionally made of cypress wood, the first Bugaku masks covered just the face of the performer. Unlike the exaggerated gigaku style, they were quite natural, but became more elaborate over time.



## Gyodo

From around 792 to 1185, the gyodo mask was used in Buddhist processions at various events, such as the dedication of a new temple. Designed to represent various Buddhist figures including deities, gods and demons, gyodo masks were oversized and covered the entire face.

## Noh

Part of Japan's highly stylized noh theater (popularized in the 14th Century), noh masks are designed to change expressions based upon light and shadows. Carved of wood, they are smaller than the actor's face and have little holes through which the actor can see. Eighty or more different masks were necessary for a performance.

## Kyogen

Kyogen masks are similar to noh masks but most wear happy expressions or are extremely distorted. Kyogen is a type of comedy, and all the masks are designed to elicit audience laughter. While noh masks for a single performance may number in the hundreds, there are only 20 different types of masks in a Kyogen performance.



"Three pictures of the same female [Noh] mask showing how the expression changes with a tilting of the head. In these pictures, the mask was affixed to a wall with constant lighting, and only the camera moved."

Read more about Japanese masks at:

[http://www.ehow.com/about\\_5376042\\_japanese-masks-history-meaning.html](http://www.ehow.com/about_5376042_japanese-masks-history-meaning.html)



# The Folk Tales



*Amaterasu and the Cave: In graphic art...*



*.... and on stage.*

## Amaterasu and the Cave

One day long ago, the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu was visited by her brother Susano, the Storm God. He carelessly let loose his horses in her rice fields to feed them. Her crops were destroyed and Amaterasu was very angry. So angry, that she hid away inside a cave vowing never to come out.

The people on earth began to worry. If Amaterasu remained in the cave, there would be no more sunshine upon the earth. Without sunshine, the earth would be dark and cold. Surely they would die. So the people prayed to the gods and goddesses to help them. Finally, Uzume, the Goddess of Mirth came forward.

Uzume went to the cave entrance, and began a joyous dance upon a hollow log (barrel). She stomped her feet, beating out wild and inviting rhythms. Inside the cave Amaterasu's curiosity grew. She had to find out what made the wonderful sounds. When she came out of the cave, she was given a mirror to look into (the first mirror made by the gods). Amaterasu was so delighted to see her reflection in the mirror that she forgot her anger, and sunshine was restored to the earth.

## Story of the Serpents

*(Myth of the serpent/snake)*



After he was banished from heaven for outrageous behavior, the storm god Susano-o descended into the land of Izumo in western Japan and killed an eight-headed dragon that had been terrorizing the countryside.

From the tail of the serpent, Susano-o recovered the marvelous sword Kusanagi that he presented to his sister and that later came to form part of the Imperial Treasures of Japan. Susanoo married the girl Kushiinada-Hime (Princess Marvellous Rice Field), who he had rescued from the dragon, and together they produced many generations of gods.

To read more Japanese folk tales go to: <http://pitt.edu/~dash/japan.html>

# JAPAN



## Geography

Japan is an archipelago, or string of islands, on the eastern edge of Asia. There are four main islands: Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. There are also nearly 4,000 smaller islands. Japan's nearest mainland neighbors are the Siberian region of Russia in the north and Korea and China farther south.

Much of Japan is covered with mountains. The Japanese Alps run down the center of the largest island, Honshu. The highest peak is Mount Fuji, a cone-shaped volcano considered sacred by many Japanese. Japan has about 200 volcanoes, 60 of which are active. Three of the tectonic plates that form the earth's crust meet near Japan. They often move against each other causing dangerous earthquakes. More than a thousand earthquakes hit Japan every year. More than 126 million people live in Japan, which is comprised of large, metropolitan cities like the capital, Tokyo, and

small rural villages. Most of Japan's population is located in the coastal cities. More than 126 million people live in Japan, which is comprised of large, metropolitan cities like the capital, Tokyo, and small rural villages. Most of Japan's population is located in the coastal cities.

## History

Japan is known as the "Land of the Rising Sun," an association symbolized by its flag. Its known history dates back thousands of years. From 1100-1800, feudal lords (shoguns) held political control. They forced out all foreigners in the 1600s and Japanese culture developed in isolation for generations. In 1854, Matthew Perry of the U.S. Navy, sailed to Japan, opening the country to Western influences.

The shoguns lost political control of Japan in the 1860s, and the Emperor regained power. In the following years Japan's world influence and military power grew and on December 7, 1941, Japan attacked U.S. naval forces at Pearl Harbor. In 1945, the United States counter-attacked Japan, dropping two atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, forcing the collapse of the Japanese empire and the surrender of Japan. In 1947, Japan, under the direction of the United States, adopted a new constitution, renounced war, granted basic human rights, and declared itself a democracy.

Today, the United States has a good relationship with Japan and its government, which consists of a Prime Minister and legislative bodies. Japan is also the only country in the world with a reigning emperor, although he serves mostly as a figurehead. The present emperor of Japan, Akihito, took the throne in 1989.



## Culture

Written Japanese language, or kanji, is closely related to written Chinese, utilizing pictorial symbols to depict the meaning of words. The Japanese also use two phonetic alphabets, hiragana and katakana, which incorporate the characters, and a third alphabet, called romaji, which uses Roman letters.

Festivals or matsuri mark all aspects of Japanese life, from observing the seasons, to celebrating children to remembering ancestors. Hundreds of matsuri take place all over Japan every year, and taiko are drums and drummers are usually central to these events.

For more information about Japan, go to:  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan>



### Japanese Flag

Japan is often called the Land of the Rising Sun due to its geographic location in the far east. The Japanese flag, illustrates this phrase, with the red circle, symbolizing the sun, in the center of a white field.



### Kanji

Kanji are symbols of words borrowed from the Chinese written language, and often look similar to the words they represent. Here are the kanji for tree (left), woods (middle), and forest (right). Notice how the kanji for tree looks like a tree, and as you add more trees, you create the woods, and finally, the forest.



### Mon: Japanese Family Crest

Mon started in the 11th century when ruling dynasties of the Imperial Court designed family symbols to adorn their formal clothing. The designs of flowers and birds represent elegant images of court life. The samuri class used similar emblems on their banners, flags, and weapons after they came to power in the 12th century. Samuri chose designs to represent warriors, such as arrows, dragons, and bats. Later, common people came to use family crests too, with symbols depicting familiar objects like rabbits, mountains and tools.

Mon designs are created to fit inside a small circular space. This composition shows something about the Japanese economic use of space.



**Teaching Artist Materials  
for Cal Performances in the Classroom Teacher Workshop  
(held Saturday, January 10, 2015)**

**Performance:** Matsuri Taiko

**Welcome:** (Sabrina) Set frame, clarify learning goals.

**Intro:** Kodo is a performance ensemble that works with the traditional Japanese folk music and dance and taiko, transforming them into contemporary performance art. Kodo uses traditional ways of teaching/training. This style of training contributes to the quality and intensity of performance you see on stage. We would like to give you a sample experience of how taiko players train.

*Along the way we will try make connections to the “12 Tools” along the way.*

**Establish Environment – Entering the dojo:** The word “dojo” literally means “the way” A dojo is a place of learning. Sensei is the instructor. *Please and thank you tool. Treating the space you enter with appreciation. Treating each other with kindness.*

Learn to bow (see study guide)– Japanese cultural, physical gesture of respect . Re-enter Dojo with bow to show *respect for space and for Sensei*  
Circle up and each person introduce themselves.

**Working Together:** *Listening tool with eyes ears and heart*

Warm-up the body (counting, pass counting) *Listen to each other*

End with Bow together to show *respect for each other*

Sit in “seiza” – “hara breathing”. *Breathing tool*

Sit in circle bow saying “yoroshiku onegaishimasu” meaning “be kind to each other”

**Taiko Instruments:** Demonstration Brief history of taiko

Instrument demo (see study guide): horagai, sassara, kane, chappa, mokugyo, fue, shime, okedo, chudaiko. (*respect of instruments*)

Bachi –pass out with bow to show *respect for instruments. Please and thank you tool.*

**Prepare to Play Taiko**

Kiai –source of energy- “ki” comes from the hara. Vocalized energy. (see study guide) Pass sound as teams. Pass in a circle. *Listening*

Kata – Demonstration physical form - Approach the drum with correct attitude of body and mind. Showing *respect for yourself.*

**Play Taiko**

Group Kata - *Personal space tool. Enough room for everyone to play*

First sound on the drum

*Listening /apology and forgiveness tool. No blame, focus on listening with heart to sound like one drum.*

Oroshi – Introduction of “ma” – the space between beats. Playing a drum roll Using kiai to give each other energy and support.

*Patience tool. Take turns playing the taiko. Taking time tool. Using time to watch and learn.*

**Reflections:** Sabrina and Rica

## **Break**

### **Evoking spirits**

Shi Shi Mai demonstration (see study guide)

Shi Shi Mai dance and chase away evil spirits away and brings good luck

Participation Masks – transformative quality to embody, change energy to be fierce in a good way, to chase away evil spirits.

### **Mythology: darkness and light**

The story of Ameterasu. (see study guide) The birth of the first taiko brings back light from darkness.

### **Importance of taiko in the community**

Teach Matsuri (see study guide) rhythms to entice Ameteratsu out of the cave Method of teaching using oral tradition **Listening tool with eyes ears and heart**

Kuchi-shoga (taiko vocabulary)

**Play together as community**

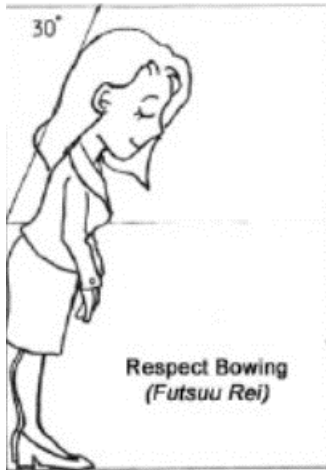
## **Closing**

Seiza

**Final Reflection:** Sabrina

## TAIKO TERMINOLOGY

### Entering the Dojo



Respect Bow, 30 degrees: Thirty degrees is actually quite a lot and feels like quite a lot, if you go ahead and do it. This bow is for entering the dojo (place of learning)



**Kneeling Bow,** Touch your head to the floor: Very traditional and very beautiful.

**Yoroshiku onegaishimasu:** “ be kind to each other” Count to ten in Japanese

### Count to ten in Japanese

1	ichi	6	roku
2	ni	7	shichi
3	san	8	hachi
4	she	9	ku
5	go	10	ju

## **Seiza is a formal way to sit.**

If you respect your teacher then, you sit seiza in front of him/her. If you respect your fellow students, you sit seiza with them. If your teacher continues to sit seiza then you continue to sit with them as a demonstration of mutual respect and of shared values. In seiza we can sit upright, with our spine erect, our rib cage open giving our internal organs space to function. We can balance our head and see clearly about us without constriction to the neck – we are alert. So, we demonstrate what we feel – we are awake and receptive. We demonstrate to our teachers and our fellow students that we are in a state of balanced readiness.

## **Kiai**

Ki is energy ai is from verb awasu “to unite”. Martial artists from the east believed that a Kiai is a method of focusing their Ki. Kiai comes from you hara. In taiko used to offer support and energy to other players. Also used as a musical cue or signal.

## **Kata**

Kata is the “form or shape” of your body when playing taiko.

Ma

Ma is the space between things.

## **Oroshi**

Right an left hand pattern of even beats. The space between the beats starts out big and becomes smaller and smaller into a drum roll.

## **KI (kee) ACTIVITY**

Your hara is located at the center of your body, the belly. Ki “energy” comes from the hara. Taiko players work at becoming stronger, cultivating their ki. by sitting in **seiza** and practicing **hara breathing**.

## **Hara breathing**

- 1) Sit on the floor in a position that is comfortable (cross-legged or on the knees is good).
- 2) Let your hands rest in a still position.
- 3) Stretch your head and shoulders to the sky.
- 4) Take one deep breath in. Sink into the floor as you exhale.
- 5) Close your eyes, and keep them closed through the entire meditation.
- 6) Breathe using the following pattern.
  1. INHALE through the nose filling the hara with air, to a slow count of six
  2. EXHALE through the nose
- 7) Repeat this pattern at least ten times.

Try hara breathing lying down. Place a book on your abdomen, then place one hand on the book and the other on your chest. Try to breath by only moving the book and not your chest. This sort of breathing is very calming. Try breathing only from your chest and watch your mood change!



## **Matsuri Taiko (Festival Drumming)**

Taiko rhythms are taught using the oral tradition called “kuchi-shoga” meaning “mouth singing.” Each sound played is represented by a phonetic syllable creating a taiko vocabulary.

This is the vocabulary needed to play Matsuri Taiko.

Don - is loud sound played on the center of the drum. Su - is the rest where there is no sound at all.

Kara - two sounds on the rim

### **Matsuri Melody (5 patterns)**

- #1     Don Don Don Kara Kara
- #2     Don Don Don Don Kara Kara
- #3     Su Don Su Don Don Kara Kara
- #4     Doro Kara Don Don Kara Kara
- #5     Doro Kara Don Don Don Kara Kara

## TAIKO HISTORY

The Japanese word “**taiko**” (tye-koh) means drum. The directness and immediacy of the drum has made it an important musical instrument in many cultures. The Japanese have used the drum for many reasons. An early practical use of the *taiko* was to determine the boundaries of the village. A village was as large as the booming sound of the drum would carry. In feudal times the drum was used in battle as military music, to give courage to the samurai warriors, and to intimidate the enemy. *Taiko* is also found in other areas of Japanese culture. It is used in various types of theater, and is one of the fundamental instruments in the music of the Imperial Court.

Drums play an important part in Japanese religions. In the **Shinto** belief system, all natural phenomena, the mountains, fire, water, and animals contain a spirit of a deity. The taiko is used as a voice to call these gods to give thanks or pray to them. The Japanese folk believed that their music was an offering to the deities, which would bring them good luck. For this reason the taiko was often at the center of folk festivals. Farmers played the taiko believing that its thunder like sound would bring rain for their crops. Fishermen played the taiko to ask for a good harvest of fish. At other festivals the drum is played to dispel evil spirits, ward off sickness, or give thanks for prosperity. In the **Buddhist** religion, rather than calling the gods, taiko is the voice of the Buddha. It is the voice of wisdom and compassion, truth, and beauty, calling to instruct the people

The drum is believed to have a **kami**, a spirit of its own. It is associated with the changing of the seasons, the cycles of nature, and the celebration of life. Taiko is deeply imbedded in the traditions of the Japanese people and can perhaps be considered the essence. The heartbeat of the Japanese spirit.



*The thunder god hammering on his drums*



*New Year's Festival drummer*



*Samurai warrior*

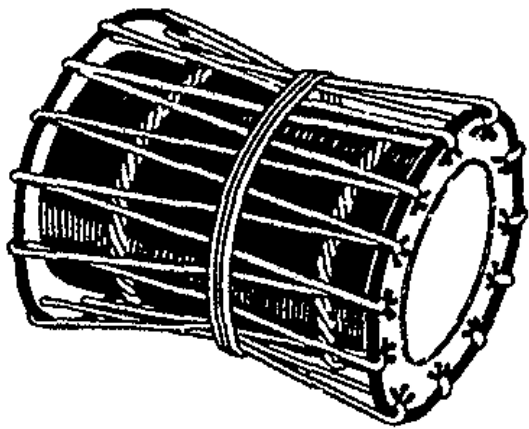
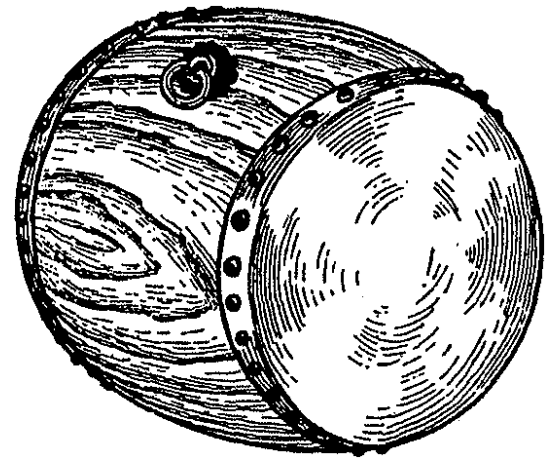
## THE DRUMS

### Odaiko/Chudaiko/Josuke

(oh-dye-ko h/choo-dye-ko h/joh-zoo-keh)

large bass drum/ middle size drum/ lead or melody drum

The traditional *taiko* in Japan are made out of a hollowed tree trunk. Taiko makers in America often use oak wine barrels for the body of the drum. Cow hide is stretched across the top and tacked down to create the head or playing surface. The larger the drum the deeper the sound. Originally goat and mule skins were used to head the drums.



### Okedo (oh-keh-doh)

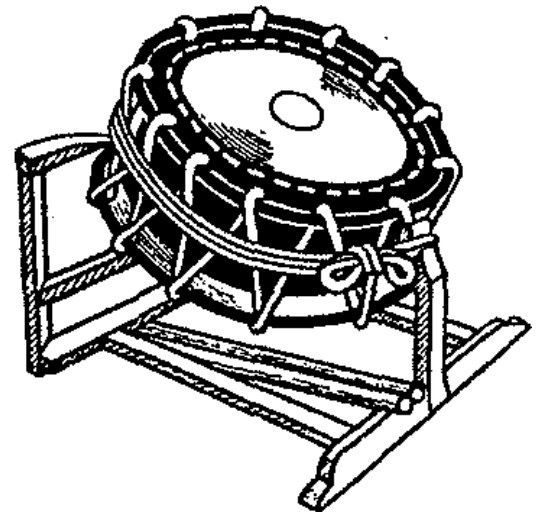
A cylindrical shaped drum.

The heads are attached by lashed rope.

This drum also comes in various sizes from very large, to a size that can be carried and played.

### Shime(shhee-meh)

In Japanese the verb, to tie, is *shimeru* (shhee-meh-roo). The heads of this smaller drum are tied tightly to create a high pitched sound. Tying requires a two person pulling system. These drums must be tied each time they are played.



### Uchiwa (oo-chee-wah)

The Japanese word uchiwa means fan.

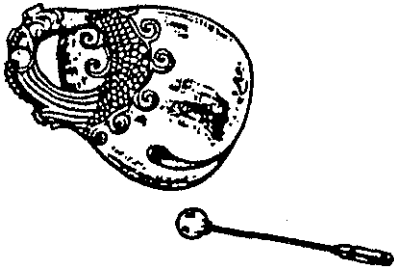
This drum is shaped like a fan, and held in the hand when played.

Its original use was by the temple monks who would beat the *uchiwa* to keep time while they chanted.

### Bachi (bah-chee)

Sticks of varying sizes, used to play the drum. Large bachi are used for large drums, small *bachi* for smaller drums. They are made of dense wood, usually Japanese oak.

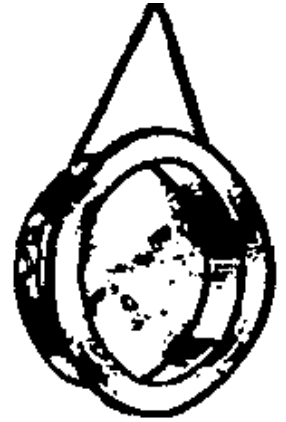
## PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS



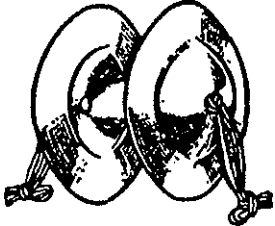
**Mokugyo** (moh-kuo-gheeyoh) Wooden fish shaped slit gong, known in the West as a Chinese temple block. Originally used in temple ceremonies. It creates a 'clip-pidy clon' sound.

### **Atarigane** (ah-tah-ree-gah-neh)

A small brass gong held in the hand and played with mallet. The mallet head is made of antler or bone, set on a bamboo stick. By hitting different parts of the gong a variety of tones can be produced. It is normally struck on the inside.

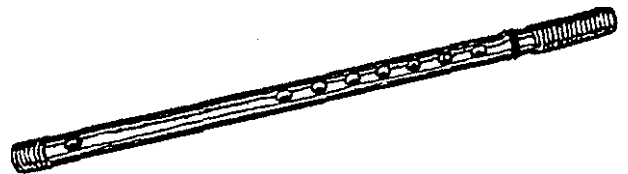


### **Chappa** (chahp-pah)



Small hand cymbals made of metal. The size and nature of this instrument, allows the player freedom of movement.

**Shinobue** (shee-noh-booh) Although it is not a percussion instrument, this flute is heard at most folk festivals. Its melody combines well with the sound of the taiko. It is made of a simple narrow length of female shine bamboo, bound and finished lightly with lacquer. This versatile flute is also used in the music of Kabuki theater and other traditional narrative songs.



### **Hyoshigi** (heeyoh-shee-ghee)

These hard wooden clappers are played in Noh theater during fight scenes. Their clatter adds greatly to the power of the fighting. Outside of the theater, the sound of the hyoshigi was once used by the fire watcher, to signal their night patrol. During the day the same hyoshigi were a signal of the kamishibai (kah-mee-shee-bah-eh) man, the candy vendor, calling the children of the neighborhood.

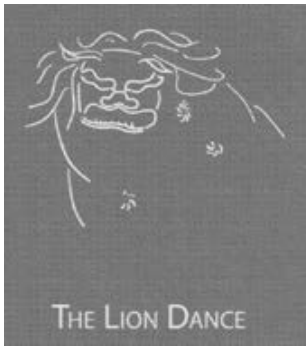


### **Bin-sasara** (bean-sah-sah-rah)

A serpent like wooden rattle made out of small slats of wood that are strung together to produce a snapping sound. The bin-sasara is played at the "snow festival". The men dance with them, always playing the "jat-jat" sound three times and always left-right-left



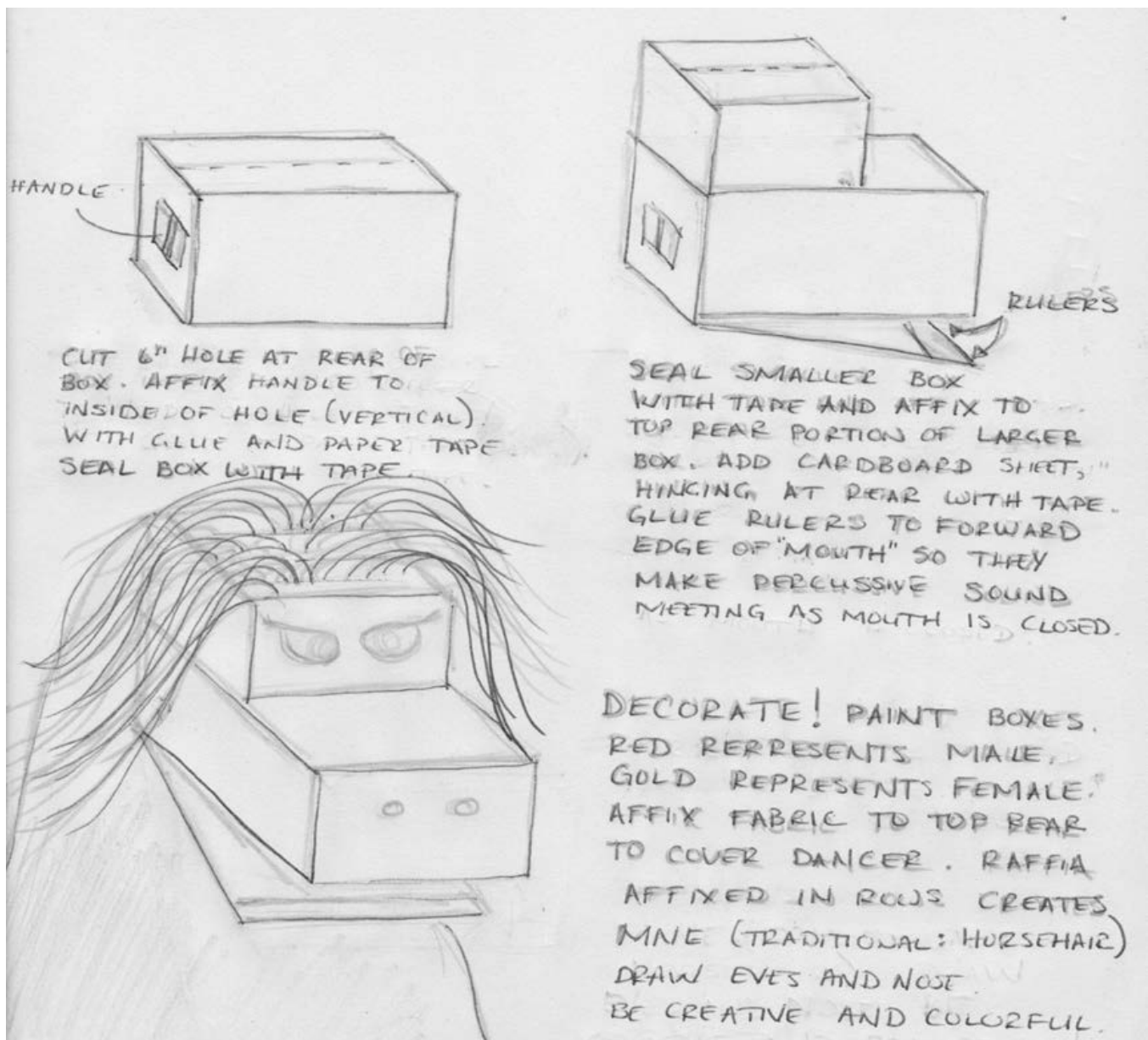




The art of taiko is believed to have its origins from regions along the trade route of the Silk Road: from North Africa, through Mesopotamia, across the Asian continent. Along with goods, people traded stories, music and art and traditions developed over generations. Along with the taiko, traveled the story of a powerful, magical creature believed to bring good luck and good fortune. The Shi Shi Mai, the Japanese lion dance, is the representation of this tale, accompanied by taiko and other instruments. In Japan, a single dancer wears the hand-carved, wooden mask of the golden female or the red male with a mane of flowing horsehair. Japan being an island, the description of the "creature" grew and evolved, sometimes fantastically,

so the lion's visage can evoke a dragon or dog. Today, there are lion dance competitions in many countries, sometimes with two dancers, sometimes several. The Japanese lion is the solitary benefactor and the dance is performed particularly at New Year, to bestow good luck and fortune. If the lion bites you, that is especially auspicious.

To **create** a lion, materials required are cardboard boxes, rulers or paint stir sticks, glue, packaging tape. Optional: paint, raffia, fabric, other decorations. Most of all, imagination. To make it to wear, choose a box that is 12" across, but you can always choose to create smaller, decorative lions.



## ORIGINS OF THE TAIKO

**Tale of Amaterasu and the Cave** tells of the mythological origin of the drum and drummer in Japan.

*The goddess Uzume dancing at the entrance to the cave. To lure Amaterasu out of the cave, she invents the first drum, and by stomping out rhythms with her feet, becomes the first drummer.*



One day long ago, the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu was visited by her brother Susana, the Storm God. He carelessly let loose his horses in her rice fields to feed them. Her crops were destroyed and Amaterasu was very angry. So angry, that she hid away inside a cave vowing never to come out.

The people on earth began to worry. If Amaterasu remained in the cave there would be no more sunshine upon the earth. Without sunshine, the earth would be dark and cold. Surely they would die. So the people prayed to the gods and goddesses to help them. Finally, Uzume, the Goddess of Mirth came forward.

Uzume went to the cave entrance, and began a joyous dance upon a hollow log (barrel). She stomped her feet, beating out wild and inviting rhythms. Inside the cave Amaterasu's curiosity grew. She had to find out what made the wonderful sounds. When she came out of the cave, she was given a mirror to look into (the first mirror made by the gods). Amaterasu was so delighted to see her reflection in the mirror that she forgot her anger, and sunshine was restored to the earth.

